

Greens failed to tell speaker about Johnathan Davis allegations in line with policy

 canberratimes.com.au/story/8422283/greens-failed-to-tell-speaker-about-johnathan-davis-allegations

Jasper Lindell

13 November 2023

■ WATCH: Shane Rattenbury gives a statement about Johnathan Davis on Monday at the Legislative Assembly.

The ACT Greens failed to immediately notify the Legislative Assembly's speaker about allegations of sexual misconduct by one of its members despite a clear policy requirement to do so.

In the wake of Johnathan Davis's resignation over allegations he had sex with a 15-year-old and an improper, but not illegal, relationship with a 17-year-old, Labor and the Greens have exchanged a war of words over the minor coalition partner's handling of the matter.

Emma Davidson, a Greens minister, was also revealed to have known about "rumours" of Mr Davis' behaviour a week before Greens Leader Shane Rattenbury.

Mr Rattenbury took aim at the Labor party, calling a statement from Deputy Chief Minister Yvette Berry expressing concern in the Greens' handling of the allegations "highly inappropriate".

Mr Rattenbury, who is also Attorney-General, defended the time it took for complaints to be referred to police, saying the party needed to be sure it was not simply "acting on what could be an untrue rumour".

"I think one needs to look at the Labor party's statement last night and question the Labor party's integrity on this matter. For them to try and create a political advantage out of the most difficult and sensitive issue my party has ever faced reflects very poorly," he said.



📷 Greens Leader Shane Rattenbury on Monday at the Legislative Assembly.
Picture by Karleen Minney

Speaker Joy Burch on Monday said she found out about the allegations made against Mr Davis, who subsequently resigned late Sunday night, by reading *The Canberra Times*.

Opposition Leader Elizabeth Lee asked Mr Rattenbury whether the party had referred the complaint to Ms Burch.

The referral was a requirement of the Assembly's child safety code of conduct and policy.

Mr Rattenbury was unable to say whether the party had referred the complaint to the speaker and took the question on notice.

The Greens on Monday night confirmed they would make a referral to Ms Burch and had been unaware of the requirement.

Complaints about members of the Assembly must be referred to the Speaker under the policy, which also says members will not "be alone with a child or young person unnecessarily" or "arrange personal contact, including online contact, with a child or young person for a purpose unrelated to official activities".

Potential criminal conduct must be referred to the police, the policy, adopted in September 2022, said.

READ MORE:

A young person, now aged 18, has alleged he and Mr Davis had a sexual relationship and had extensive conversations on a dating app, where Mr Davis allegedly solicited intimate photographs. Mr Davis, through a lawyer, has declined to comment on the allegations.

Mr Rattenbury on Monday said the Greens were aware of the claim of sharing intimate images which, if proved, would be a breach of Commonwealth law.

Ms Burch said she would be seeking information to determine what action she would take, and is considering whether an investigation is required to consider the serious allegations made against Mr Davis.

The Greens released an internal party review into the allegations made against Mr Davis, which was handed to Mr Rattenbury on Friday and concluded Mr Davis had undertaken "unethical and inappropriate" conduct.

The conduct "did not align with community expectations, and is likely to bring himself and the ACT Greens into disrepute".

READ MORE:

Mr Rattenbury also revealed the party had counselled Mr Davis a "couple of years ago" for having a relationship that was "not acceptable" with a staff member who worked at the Legislative Assembly.

Mr Davis, by resigning, had clearly understood the seriousness of these matters, Mr Rattenbury said, but later added Mr Davis had told him he believed he had done nothing illegal.

In defending the party's handling of the complaint, Mr Rattenbury said he had been dismayed by Ms Berry's statement released on Sunday night, which said the Labor caucus had unanswered questions over the incident.

"Every single member of Labor caucus has my telephone number and my email address. Not one of them contacted me," Mr Rattenbury said.

The Greens leader said the party would reflect on its handling of the allegations but said he thought it had got to police "in a reasonably short time".

Mr Rattenbury said the Greens did not know the identity of a 15 year old who Mr Davis is alleged to have had sex with.

Our journalists work hard to provide local, up-to-date news to the community. This is how you can continue to access our trusted content:

- **Bookmark canberratimes.com.au**
- **Download our app**
- **Make sure you are signed up for our breaking and regular headlines newsletters**
- **Follow us on Twitter**
- **Follow us on Instagram**